

NOTE: Items printed in green are of particular interest to residents.

## **FIRE SAFETY IS A STATE OF MIND!!**

Schools want their dormitories to be as safe as possible for their residents, and staff. However, unless they are in the Fire Safety business, many people are not aware of the ways to keep their facilities fire safe.

The Virginia State Fire Marshal's Office has developed these informational brochures so our clients may learn some of the tips for fire safety. These tips are based on the most common Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code infractions we find in dormitory type facilities. NOTE: Some schools may have more restrictive requirements.

## **10 HOT FIRE SAFETY TIPS!!**

1. **Exits:** Exit doors, stairways and corridors are provided so that people using the facility have an easy means to exit the building in the event of an emergency. Most exit ways are marked with exit signs. Often, but not always, these doors are operated by panic type hardware, which a person merely has to push to open the door.

Furniture or anything that will keep people from getting to an exit in normal lighting, darkness, or smoky conditions must never block exit ways, even temporarily. Also exit doors must never be locked from the inside.

2. **Emergency Lighting:** Many dormitories have emergency lighting, which provide temporary lighting in the event of power failure. This lighting is not designed to allow normal

operations during a power failure but only minimal lighting for up to one hour to allow safe evacuation of your facility. **CANDLES SHOULD NEVER BE USED IN DORMITORIES!**

Battery operated emergency lighting is to be checked once a month. Pushing or sliding the test button provided can do this. Yearly, the light must be tested by disconnecting power to it or by cutting power to the facility (if practical) for one hour.

3. **Exit Lights:** Most dormitories have exit lighting at each required exit door. The lights in these fixtures must be operating at all times. If these fixtures have battery back up they are to be tested as above.

4. **Extension Cords:** Extension cords are to be used for temporary use *only*. Temporary use includes holiday lighting and other uses that will last only a few hours to a few days. Extension cords are never to be run through doors, windows, or under rugs or carpeting. Cords must be in good condition and same size or larger than the cord of the appliance. If the cords from an appliance do not reach an outlet, a permanent outlet should be added to supply that appliance.

5. **Multi-Plug Adapters:** Multi-plug adapters are designed to allow more than one plug to be plugged in to a single outlet. These are **not allowed** in dormitories. If additional outlets are needed, permanent outlets should be provided. These may require an additional circuit. Certified electricians should be contacted to do this type of work.

6. **Fire Alarm:** Many dormitories have a fire alarm system. These systems are required to have an annual maintenance check done by a trained

alarm technician. Manual pull stations are required to be tested every six months. Single station smoke detectors must be tested monthly and logs kept of those tests.

In dormitories that have battery-operated smoke detectors, these devices must be tested weekly and a log of those tests kept. Students in rooms where a smoke detector has been disabled or removed may be prosecuted.

7. **Fire Drills:** Only high-rise dormitories are required by code to have fire drills. These must be done annually and a record kept of the drill. Most schools also hold fire drills in low-rise dorms.

8. **Material Storage:** All storage must be 24 inches below ceilings. If your dormitory has a sprinkler system, residents must never hang clothing, decorations, or anything else from the sprinkler heads. Also, Sprinkler heads must never be painted.

9. **Furnishings:** Decorations such as burlap, fish netting, parachutes, and flags hanging from the ceiling are not permitted in dorms. **If approved by your school**, electrical appliances and lights should be UL listed and in safe working condition.

10. **Parties:** After all parties and other social events designated persons should check under seat cushions, in trash cans and any other areas where lighted smoking materials may have been accidentally tossed.

**IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED  
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION  
CONTACT THE REGIONAL STATE  
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<http://www.DHCD.vipnet.org/dbfr/sfmo/sfmoindex.htm>

# **FIRE SAFETY**

# ***TIPS***

## **FOR DORMITORIES**

Based on the  
Virginia Statewide Fire Prevention Code



Presented by

**COMMONWEALTH OF  
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